REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL RECORDS: FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

SUPPLEMENT No. 21 (A/46/21)

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New York, 1991

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its thirty-fourth session, the General Assembly decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities, established under Assembly resolution 33/115 C of 18 December 1978, which would be known as the Committee on Information, and to increase its membership from 41 to 66. In its resolution 34/182 of 18 December 1979, the Assembly requested the Committee on Information:

> "(a) To continue to examine United Nations public information policies and activities, in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;
>
> "(b) To evaluate and follow up the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications;
>
> "(c) To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly;"

and requested the Committee on Information and the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its thirty-fifth session.

2. At its thirty-fifth session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 35/201 of 16 December 1980, expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the report of the Committee and the recommendations of its Ad Hoc Working Group, 1/ reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in Assembly resolution 34/182, and decided to increase the membership of the Committee from 66 to 67. The Committee on Information agreed, at its organizational session in 1980, that the principle of geographical rotation would be applied to all the officers of the Committee and that they should be elected for two-year terms of office.

3. At its thirty-sixth to forty-fourth sessions, the General Assembly again expressed its satisfaction with the work of the Committee on Information, approved the reports of the Committee 2/ and its recommendations, and reaffirmed the mandate given to the Committee in resolution 34/182 (General Assembly resolutions 36/149 B, 37/94 B, 38/82 B, 39/98 A, 40/164 A, 41/68 A, 42/162, 43/60 and 44/50). At its forty-fifth session, the General Assembly took note of the report of the Committee on Information, and adopted its consensus resolutions as contained in General Assembly resolutions 45/76 A and B. The General Assembly further requested the Committee to report to the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

4. At its thirty-ninth session, the General Assembly appointed two new members of the Committee, namely China and Mexico; at its forty-first session, the Assembly appointed Malta as a new member of the Committee; at its

forty-third session, Hungary, Ireland and Zimbabwe were appointed; and at its forty-fourth session, the Assembly appointed Nepal as a new member.

5. At its forty-fifth session, the Assembly decided, on the recommendation of the Committee on Information to increase the membership of the Committee from 74 to 78 members, and appointed Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay as members of the Committee. The General Assembly also decided on the appointment of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic as a member of the Committee on Information, with immediate effect, to fill the vacancy which had been occupied by the German Democratic Republic.

6. The Committee is composed of the following Member States:

Algeria
Argentina
Bangladesh
Belgium
Benin
Brazil
Bulgaria
Burundi
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic
Chile
China
Colombia
Congo
Costa Rica
Côte d'Ivoire
Cuba
Cyprus
Czechoslovakia
Denmark
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Finland
France
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Guatemala
Guinea
Guyana
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kenya
Lebanon
Malta
Mexico
Mongolia
Morocco
Nepal
Netherlands
Niger
Nigeria
Pakistan
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Singapore
Somalia
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Syrian Arab Republic
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United Republic of Tanzania
United States of America
Uruguay
Venezuela
Viet Nam
Yemen
Yugoslavia
Zaire
Zimbabwe

II. ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION

A. Opening of the session

7. The organizational meeting of the thirteenth session of the Committee was convened at United Nations Headquarters on 4 March 1991. The Committee held one meeting.

B. Adoption of the agenda

8. At its organizational session, the Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Admission of new members.
4. Election of officers.
5. Organization and programme of work for 1991.
6. Other business.

C. Admission of new members

9. The Committee welcomed the representatives of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay as new members.

D. Election of officers

10. In accordance with the principle of geographical rotation, the Committee elected by acclamation the following officers for the period 1991-1993:

Chairman: Mr. Ricardo Lagorio (Argentina)

Vice-Chairmen: Mr. Bob Hiensch (Netherlands)
Mr. Mansoor Suhail (Pakistan)

The Under-Secretary-General for Public Information (in her capacity as Acting Chairman prior to the election of the Chairman) informed the Committee that it had been agreed to defer the election of one Vice-Chairman, as well as that of the Rapporteur until the substantive session, to be held from 4 to 19 April 1991. That would allow for the completion of consultations within the regional groups concerned.

E. Organization and programme of work for 1991

11. The Committee adopted, without objection, the programme of work as orally amended contained in document A/AC.198/1991/2/Rev.1. The additional item to be added after paragraph II (3) would read "Review of United Nations information centres". The agreement to amend the programme of work was the result of informal consultations with the spokesmen of the regional groups and China; the Department of Public Information was also requested to prepare a conference room paper on the United Nations information centres.

12. The Committee also agreed to the proposed list of questions to be considered, which formed the basis of the agenda of the substantive session:

(a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information;

(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order;

(c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications.

13. For the consideration of item 5 of the agenda, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on public information activities of the United Nations pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine 3/ submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 (b) (vii) of its resolution 45/76 B;

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on technical assistance to radio stations that are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa 4/ submitted pursuant to the request made by the General Assembly in paragraph 1 (e) of its resolution 45/76 B;

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on the review of the Yearbook of the United Nations: 1990 survey; 5/

(d) Report on the activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee. 6/

III. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION

A. Organizational questions

1. Opening of the session

14. The thirteenth session of the Committee was convened at United Nations Headquarters from 4 to 19 April 1991. The Committee held nine meetings.

2. Adoption of the agenda and programme of work

15. At its substantive session the Committee adopted the provisional agenda which had been prepared in accordance with decisions taken by the Committee on Information at its organizational session held on 4 March 1991. The Committee at this session also established an open-ended working group and conducted further informal consultations through the spokesmen of the regional groups and China.

3. Statement by the Chairman

16. The Chairman of the Committee made a statement at the opening of the substantive session (see annex I).

4. Election of officers

17. The Committee, in accordance with decisions taken at its organizational session, elected its remaining officers by acclamation, Mr. Oleksandr Bouts'ko (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) as its third Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Sabri Boukadoum (Algeria) as Rapporteur of the Committee. Both will serve a two-year term.

5. Observers

18. The following Member States took part in the session as observers: Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Comoros, Iraq, Israel, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Namibia, Nicaragua, Oman, Panama, Senegal, Sweden and Thailand. The representatives of the Holy See and Switzerland also participated as observers.

19. Representatives of the following specialized agencies were present: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Health Organization (WHO).

20. In addition, representatives of the World Federation of United Nations Associations were present.

B. Substantive questions

1. General debate and consideration of substantive questions

21. Statements during the general debate were made by or on behalf of the following States members of the Committee: Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland (on behalf of the Group of Western and other States), Jamaica, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Yemen, Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe. Statements were also made by the observers for Luxembourg (on behalf of the 12 States of the European Community) and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (on behalf of the Union of Arab Maghreb).

(a) Promotion of the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better balanced dissemination of information

22. In addressing this question, a large number of delegations commented on the consensus resolution achieved at the twelfth session of the Committee on Information. They expressed the view that the consensus, which had marked a turning point in the debate on United Nations questions relating to information, had provided a new basis for the deliberations within the Committee; and called on that body to build on the consensus with a view to enhancing its effectiveness. They also expressed the hope and stressed the need for that consensus to translate into the practical work of the Department of Public Information. Others suggested that with the consensus as a starting point, the Committee would now be able to concentrate on more specific issues, particularly the revitalization of United Nations information policies and activities.

23. A large number of delegations reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental principles of freedom of information and freedom of expression and opinion. It was emphasized that freedom of information was a basic human right and the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated. It was also in that context that several representatives raised the issue of freedom of the press, reasserting the absolute primacy of the right of each individual to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas regardless of frontiers. One representative, speaking on behalf of several others, noted in that regard that violations of freedom of the press anywhere must be regarded as a violation of the rights of all. Another representative, speaking on behalf of several others, expressed the view that it was their duty to denounce any violation of freedom of the press.

24. A few delegations, in providing information about domestic developments in the field of information and communication, informed the Committee of new information-related rights and freedoms which were either lately reflected, or were about to be reflected, in legislation adopted in their respective

countries. The view was expressed that legal norms and political steps alone could not ensure that the principles involved in the genuine practice of the free flow of information were attained. The view was also expressed that some basic infrastructures and up-to-date technology was needed to allow these principles to be effectively supported. In that regard, it was suggested that for countries experiencing an uneasy period of economic transition, broad-based international cooperation and assistance channelled through government, public or private sources was much needed to help smooth the path for a genuine and effective flow of information.

25. It was understood by a large number of delegations that communications, development and the free and uninhibited flow of news and information were important prerequisites for the realization of more effective global communication. In that connection, many delegations drew attention to the need to reduce imbalances and disparities that still existed between the developed and the developing countries. Those imbalances, it was pointed out, deprived more than 80 per cent of the peoples of the world of their possible contributions to world peace, mutual understanding and progress. One delegation noted in that regard that while the developed countries were concerned about the information glut and the overwhelming impact of the visual media, the developing countries were finding it increasingly difficult to transmit their viewpoints and values to the outside world. One delegation expressed the view that there was much the developing countries wished to tell the world; the need, for instance, for a better deal in trade, the need to be free from the yoke of poverty and the burden of high interest rates and spiralling debt.

26. It was acknowledged by most delegations that those disparities were due to lack of access to modern technology and lack of resources to take advantage of the technology available. It was against that background that one delegation urged the sharing of benefits of technology by those who had the best tools of information and communication with those grappling with basic problems of literacy and information.

27. It was noted in that connection that the dissemination and exchange of information had become an increasingly indispensable factor in promoting peace and development in the world. Delegations maintained that in the field of information, first priority should be given to narrowing the huge gap between the capacity of information dissemination of the developed countries and that of the developing countries, and changing the global dominant position of a few developed countries and the dependent status of numerous developing countries. One delegation expressed concern that some mass media of developed countries had made use of their technological superiority to propagate intentionally or unintentionally their own social, economic and ideological values on developing countries. That delegation expressed the view that such practices were undesirable in realizing genuine information freedom.

28. In that regard, other delegations drew attention to the virtual monopolistic control and one-way flow of information from news agencies in industrialized countries. It was noted that it was the third world countries and their vulnerable peoples who were the victims of that inequitable flow of information. Those delegations emphasized that the United Nations could not remain powerless in the light of that monopolistic control. One delegation noted that its Government had proposed that a working group or committee be

set up to do all the preparatory work necessary to produce an international information charter which would lay down the principles for an international world order. That suggestion was supported by two other delegations, one of whom spoke on behalf of several other States. That delegation also put forward a series of proposals in that regard that would entail setting up working study groups or committees. Those proposals included support for international news agencies and media which acted on a regional basis, such as the Pan African News, the Islamic Press Agency and the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries. Another proposal was that those agencies become primary sources of information on third world issues. That delegation also proposed creating a world press agency under United Nations auspices which would act in a fair and effective manner and would enhance the work of the agencies mentioned above.

29. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, said the developing countries could not agree to inequality and lack of freedom in information, particularly as the developed countries with their advanced technologies were in a position to change public opinion and influence the moral, religious and cultural values of peoples.

30. Another representative noted that since the adoption of a declaration on the new world information and communication order nothing had changed. He pointed to the fact that at the end of the 1950s developing countries had access to only 5 per cent of the media and that figure had changed very little since that time. He further pointed out that only 5 per cent of computers and 2 per cent of satellites were in the hands of developing countries and 10 times more information was received by them from developed countries than the other way around.

31. It was in that context that many delegations reiterated their call for the establishment of a new world information and communication order. It was emphasized that the new world information and communication order offered the best hope for removing the inequalities existing between the information systems of the developing and the developed world. Some delegations expressed the view that the gap in the distribution of means of communication and in the information flow between the developed and the developing countries had been further widened. It was further noted that such an order was not intended to be negative in any manner, but could indeed be complementary to political endeavours. It was emphasized by some delegations that the call for a new world information and communication order was not based on any opposition to the principle of the free flow of information, but on the conviction that a new order would help to secure that principle.

32. It was observed that a call for a new world order which was expected to be based on the principles of justice only reflected the transformation of the climate of international affairs. It was also noted that the implementation of the new world information and communication order would foster mutual understanding, promote cooperation and closer relations among nations and contribute to strengthening world peace and security. One delegation also affirmed that the goal his country hoped to achieve from the new world information and communication order was the meaningful participation of its people and media, whether public or private, in the substantive production, processing and dissemination of news and information, domestically and internationally.

33. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, noted that for a number of years his group had contributed to reducing the disparities existing between the developed and developing countries by carrying out appropriate bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes under the auspices of UNESCO and other international organizations. That delegation acknowledged that there was a need to strengthen communication capacities and improve the media infrastructure and communications technology in the developing countries, particularly in the areas of training of journalists and dissemination of information so as to assure to the populations of those countries the full benefits of freedom of information.

34. Some delegations expressed the view that it was essential that assistance to developing countries be increased and accelerated so that they might develop their information and communication infrastructures and capabilities, launch and improve their information systems with appropriate technology suited to their respective needs, increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process and ensure a free flow of information at all levels.

35. In that connection, many delegations expressed deep appreciation for the efforts of UNESCO under the International Programme for the Development of Communication 7/ to assist developing countries in the promotion of communications development. The International Programme for the Development of Communication was seen as an important element in the implementation of its new strategy for communication in the service of humanity based on international cooperation. It was also an essential instrument for the development of global communication and information in general, the further development of infrastructures and strengthening of the information and communication capabilities of the developing countries. One delegation expressed confidence that the International Programme for the Development of Communication could play an important role in promoting greater cooperation between the developed and the developing countries.

36. Several delegations drew attention to the activity of the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, as part of the efforts by those countries to overcome the information gap between the developed and the developing world. In that context, delegations also paid a tribute to the work of the Economic Pool of News Agencies of the Non-Aligned Countries and the improvements in the volume and quality of cooperative activities of their broadcasting and radio organizations. Though the News Agencies Pool had opened awareness for national news agencies of non-aligned countries to become equal partners in the exchange of information at the international level, a great deal still remained to be done in order to restore equitable balance in the international information structures. Possibilities still lagged behind needs. In that regard, some delegations noted that many non-aligned countries did not possess their own news agencies, or in cases where they did possess them, their material and national resources were scarce, thus limiting their participation in the Pool and the world information system. Those countries urged the increased assistance of the United Nations and the international community as well as all those countries capable and willing to help. In that connection, one delegation though expressing satisfaction that the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat had continued to cooperate with the News Agencies Pool expressed the view that that arrangement could be made more

effective through significantly increasing the content of dispatches and other possible means.

37. In that connection, one delegation expressed concern that this year there was no statement by a representative of UNESCO to the Committee.

(b) Continuation of the examination of United Nations public information policies and activities in the light of the evolution of international relations, particularly during the past two decades, and of the imperatives of the establishment of the new international economic order and of a new world information and communication order

(c) Evaluation and follow-up of the efforts made and the progress achieved by the United Nations system in the field of information and communications

38. Many delegations agreed that the consensus arrived at last year had allowed the Committee on Information to address in a pragmatic way the questions concerning the public information policies and activities of the United Nations. The members of the Committee welcomed the detailed oral report by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information on the activities of the Department. A large number of delegations commended the performance of the Department which had carried out its mandates admirably in the midst of budgetary and other constraints. In that regard, specific mention was made of the Department's coverage of the crisis in the Gulf. One delegation noted in that context that the increased visibility of the United Nations should not be confined to its role in the Gulf crisis. He expressed the view that his delegation, along with many others, believed that the world body was entering an era in which it could better perform the tasks for which it was created and through which it would emerge as an agent for both global stability and change. Cooperation with the Committee on Information in that regard would become increasingly more important.

39. Some delegations noted that because of the realities of budgetary constraints faced by the Department of Public Information, the Department must ensure that none of its traditional areas of coverage stood to suffer because of major unforeseen events. In that context, one representative drew attention to the fact that after the announcement of repeal in South Africa of some apartheid legislation, the Department could have come up with an explanation for the benefit of the peoples of the world, on the impact of such a repeal, and how that repeal fitted in the whole United Nations scheme. That explanation would have helped to place the whole question of repeal in its proper perspective, thereby preventing the spread of notions biased in favour of the South Africa regime. The same representative observed that no such explanations or analysis were forthcoming from the Department as far as she was aware. She urged the Department to use that example as a source of encouragement to help it in shaping a correct public perception of events in its respective Member States.

40. Some delegations recommended that the Department should receive clear directives from Member States as to the setting of priorities and the latitude of flexibility it could exert in selecting and conveying its material as well as on matters of access to budget. The need to define clearly the mandate of the Department and to give it the necessary flexibility to respond to the increasing and sometimes unprecedented level of activity by the United Nations was seen as very important.

41. In that regard, one delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, noted that it was of crucial importance that the Department be able to perform its tasks with flexibility and to meet the demand for newsworthiness and punctuality without too rigid regulations imposed. That delegation affirmed that service and flexibility were complementary and that it was up to the Committee on Information to see them secured by adequate resolutions.

42. Another delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, noted that it was in the interests of all countries to consider how best the Member States could assist the Department in fulfilling its obligations of providing to the greatest extent possible, full and up-to-date information on the United Nations and its activities. That delegation suggested that there should be some ongoing mechanism for the Committee on Information to work with the Department. Others expressed the need to establish an informal follow-up mechanism on the Department's activities between sessions of the Committee on Information with regional representatives.

43. On the issue of an ongoing mechanism between the Committee on Information and the Department, one delegation expressed the view that there was a considerable risk that that suggestion could create more bureaucracy, paperwork and regulations. That representative declared his openness to discuss alternatives to achieve improvements, and invited the Under-Secretary-General to put forward her ideas on the future relations between the Committee and the Department.

44. Many delegations expressed support for the Department's efforts to rationalize its work and revitalize its structure so as to render its activities more efficient and effective. It was felt that those efforts, from which Member States continued to derive benefits, had contributed to improving the image of the United Nations in the world and to the recent achievements of the United Nations in various areas.

45. A few delegations noted, however, that the Department must be prepared to deal with the sudden increase in public interest in the Organization; but also when that interest declined, it must be able to do something about it. Those representatives suggested that the Department should be better prepared to undertake extraordinary information activities and should be in a position to shape public opinion. In that context, allocation of resources to activities which had been designated as high priority should take into account the different interests of the various regions. Resources assigned to those priorities should not be reassigned to cover new situations.

46. It was suggested that it might be useful in the future that stronger coordination between the Department and the specialized agencies be developed in the field of information. In that regard, it was also observed that while some United Nations institutions maintained their policies of providing important documentation free of charge, others requested payment for their publications. It was suggested that the Department, in order to strengthen further the capacity of its policies and activities, should consider a greater financial involvement of United Nations specialized organizations in disseminating information on their own activities.

47. Several delegations commended the work of the Executive Media Services, which, they noted, played a fundamental role in reflecting the objectives and activities of the Organization.

48. The Department was urged by several delegations to continue to focus attention on areas of special concern to Member States. The following areas were noted: peace-making and peace-keeping operations, international endeavours for global environmental protection, the eradication of apartheid, the situation in the Middle East, the question of Palestine and the Palestinian intifadah, the promotion of human rights, the status of women, drug abuse, terrorism, assistance to refugees and displaced persons, the problems of economic and social development, including those of the least developed countries, African economic development and the promotion of international economic cooperation aimed at resolving such problems as the debt problem.

49. Members of the Committee expressed their satisfaction at some of the innovative initiatives by the Department. A number of representatives supported the call for a defined role of the Department in the growing responsibilities of the United Nations in peace-keeping and election monitoring. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, noted that the Department should respond to crises as they occurred and it must have a clear role in such critical areas of United Nations responsibilities. The representative of that group stated that they were struck by a comment of the Under-Secretary-General in an earlier meeting when she noted that owing to internal control factors it had not been possible to find a way for a United Nations television crew to accompany the head of the recent humanitarian assessment mission in the Gulf. That delegation expressed the view that at a time when the world was strongly focused on the United Nations, that situation raised serious questions for members of the Committee. That delegation stressed that an information component should be an important and planned dimension of the United Nations role in areas such as peace-keeping and election monitoring.

50. One delegation urged that attention should be paid to an approach whereby a decision to commit the Organization to any major activity had to be accompanied by the allocation of funds sufficient not only to perform the activity but also to provide for its international support. At the same time, more use should be made of extrabudgetary resources to provide for the distribution of papers, studies and documents of the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

51. Another delegation expressed interest in seeing a symposium on peace-keeping operations take place in his region bearing in mind the experience of the region in that field.

52. One delegation brought to the attention of the Committee and the Department the fact that although the term "peace-making" had been used in some sectors, the exact meaning and extension of the concept still seemed to be under review in the relevant committees.

53. With regard to issues affecting the environment, one representative asserted that one of the main tasks which lay ahead for the Department was coverage of what was probably the single most prominent United Nations event of the current decade, the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. That delegation attached great importance to the need to ensure a balanced and objective approach to public information activities in connection with the forthcoming Conference, in order to provide the most

appropriate atmosphere for its successful realization. That delegation took note of the activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee and the Department in connection with that event and expressed readiness to cooperate fully with the relevant organs for the coverage of the issues which would be put before the 1992 Conference. In that connection, one delegation informed the Committee of the recent poll carried out in his country in which some 82 per cent of those polled expressed a desire to know more about the environment. He noted that this was not surprising as the people of his country were concerned about the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster since the long-term results of exposure to small daily doses of radiation were still not known. That delegation expressed appreciation for the attention which the Organization had paid to those problems, they were global issues requiring an international response.

54. Members of the Committee welcomed the comprehensive paper on the review of United Nations information centres and the report on the Yearbook of the United Nations: 1990 survey. 5/

55. A large number of delegations commented favourably on the paper on United Nations information centres. One delegation, speaking on behalf of several others, emphasized that the centres must be given the necessary guidelines to respond to situations and crises as they developed. In that connection, the delegation expressed dissatisfaction with the role played by the centres during the crisis in the Gulf.

56. Many delegations commenting on the paper expressed the view that the information was of paramount importance. One delegation expressed the hope that the paper was only the beginning of an evaluation which should lead to better and more efficient use of the centres. A large number of delegations emphasized that the attention paid to the centres in the paper was certainly an expression of recognition of the centres' special importance as an active and irreplaceable link between the Organization and local media, information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. In that regard, one delegation was interested in knowing if centre Directors had an arrangement of periodic briefings of journalists and academicians in the countries of their accreditation. That delegation suggested that weekly briefings could produce very good results.

57. Several delegations requested the opening of centres in their respective countries. One delegation noted that for some time now his country had sought the approval of the Committee on Information and the General Assembly for the establishment of a United Nations centre. That delegation expressed the hope that its request would meet with an affirmative response. A delegation, speaking on behalf of several, strongly supported that request. Other delegations urged that centres should be strengthened and opened wherever necessary. Two delegations urged the establishment of information centres in San José and Sofia. Those delegations affirmed that they attached particular importance to the opening of information centres in their capitals and welcomed the desire expressed by other States to have information centres. One of those delegations issued an invitation to other members of the Committee to develop jointly a recommendation on the establishment of new centres, which would be adopted at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

58. In that context, a number of members of the Committee raised the issue of the criteria established by the Department for the opening of new centres. Delegations expressed regret at the demand that Member States needed to meet financial obligations in order for centres to be opened and operated. One delegation noted that, while it recognized that the procedure was a product of a General Assembly resolution, it was not out of place to state that its appreciation by historical accident had mainly affected developing countries most of whom were not members of the world body at the time of the adoption of the resolution.

59. A number of delegations drew attention to the fact that the post of centre Director in their respective countries was still vacant. Those members of the Committee emphasized that they would continue to press for efforts to be made to fill their vacant posts. Those delegations were also among the many representatives of the Committee who called for a review of the criteria for the establishment of information centres. One delegation, in that context, suggested that a concerted effort should be made to streamline the work of existing centres and encourage the opening of new ones by taking due account of the conditions and capabilities of interested host countries. In that connection, the delegation could envisage the recruitment of a competent local journalist who would carry out the work of the centre under the supervision of the Director. The centre would then benefit from the genuine communication that would exist between the two partners.

60. Other members of the Committee noted that there were no clear criteria for establishing centres; several information centres existed in small areas, while in other large geographical zones there was only one centre. One delegation noted that the last centre created in its region was that of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago in 1962. Only six centres were operating in that region, excluding the UNDP offices, which had rendered partial information assistance. One delegation suggested a study of the location and cost of centres. Another delegation suggested that more effective coordination with the local offices of UNDP could substantially enhance the effectiveness of the centres.

61. Some delegations expressed the view that they were disturbed by great disparities in the allocation of resources between centres in developed and developing countries. One delegation expressed regret that persistent requests for financial allocation to each centre had produced no results. Emphasizing that such a qualification would constitute an important first step towards the eradication of those imbalances and disparities, that delegation urged that those figures should be made available at the next and subsequent sessions of the Committee.

62. Two delegations were of the view that the Department should undertake an urgent evaluation of the performance of each of the information centres, giving careful consideration to their problems and with a view to increasing their efficiency and usefulness. Where needed, their facilities should be upgraded in order to improve their capacity to disseminate news and objective reports about United Nations activities, particularly in the local languages.

63. Some delegations had specific criticisms regarding the operations of centres in their respective countries. One delegation noted that his country was profoundly concerned by the virtual paralysis of the information centre

during the Gulf crisis. That delegation recommended that the Department should give urgent consideration to the causes of that situation.

64. Another delegation noted that the activities of the centre were limited to a few films and speeches made by United Nations officials on United Nations Day and observances. He observed that several offers to utilize its services had been made by the national television and radio services but they had not been accepted by those who managed the centre. The performance of the management of that centre was described as passive in nature. The representative called on the Department to give that centre necessary attention because of its strategic importance within its geographic region.

65. Some delegations with new centre directors expressed satisfaction with their work and that of the centres they served. One delegation noted that the new centre Director had established important contacts in a relatively short period of time. Another delegation, however, suggested that the appointment of directors of information centres was an area that needed improvement. That delegation expressed the view that very few third world incumbents had ever been appointed directors of centres in the developed countries. That seemed to imply that developing countries were devoid of personnel competent enough to take up appointments in the developed countries. That delegation emphasized that the situation was clearly undesirable and should be rectified. In that connection, one delegation called for a review of the management of the centres, so that the Organization and the populations in Member States could be better served by the activities of the centres.

66. Some delegations expressed interest in receiving information concerning the reports prepared by centre directors regarding local opinion on the role of the Secretary-General and the activities of the United Nations, which were sent to the Office for Research and the Collection of Information.

67. One delegation expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Department in organizing training seminars for local staff of the centres as well as opportunities for centre directors to meet. One delegation noted that it was looking forward to a regional meeting of directors in their area later in the year. That delegation also informed the Committee that, in spite of serious economic and social difficulties, the Government had decided to increase its financial contribution to the operating costs of the functioning of its centre by almost 40 per cent for 1991.

68. Commenting on the report prepared by the Department on the Yearbook of the United Nations: 1990 survey, 5/ most delegations viewed favourably the recommendations in the report. Some delegations asked for more information in due course as to the suggested editorial directives, clearance system, financial implication and other aspects related to their implementation. Several delegations were concerned about the timeliness of the publication and the efficient use of communications technology in that regard. One delegation emphasized, however, that innovations and changes must take place within existing budget resources.

69. Others who found the Yearbook to be a helpful and comprehensive source of information about the United Nations expressed the hope that the problems associated with its timely publication could be resolved early, along the lines suggested in the recommendations. That would allow the broad number of

specialists and researchers who would benefit from it to be able to use it more productively.

70. Many delegations supported the proposals by the external publisher on the backlog. One delegation also urged the Department to undertake the necessary administrative measures in order to ensure the continued retention of a viable professional team capable of producing the required text. Additionally, further interdepartmental consultations should be vigorously pursued in order to encourage contributions by all relevant departments.

71. Several delegations paid a tribute to the work of the Information Products Division on its production of video cassettes and documentaries on issues facing the United Nations. Many members of the Committee expressed appreciation for the video which was shown early in the session entitled "United Nations for a Better Future". Delegations were very supportive of the Department's ongoing efforts to modernize its communication technologies at Headquarters and in the field, which they considered a matter of priority.

72. Some delegations emphasized the importance of tailoring audio-visual messages to suit the cultural differences of their target audiences. In that regard, one delegation suggested that assistance could be sought from regional commissions and organizations. Another delegation stressed that for the developing countries, radio was still the most efficient means of communication, particularly as it reached more people than print or visual media. That delegation suggested close collaboration between national television organizations and United Nations television.

73. Another delegation requested that some assessment be made of the feasibility of sending radio and television material directly to broadcasters. That delegation also wanted to explore the possibility of producing a language version of "UN in Action" and "World Chronicle" and would like to initiate the development of television magazines. That delegation also informed the Committee that a number of publishing houses in his country were cooperating with the Department on a regular basis in publishing research materials and documents of the United Nations in their official language. That delegation as well as others welcomed the fact that the Department was carrying out a world-wide survey on the use of its radio programmes. It expressed the hope that the results of the survey would add to new developments in that field of United Nations information activities.

74. A number of delegations spoke of the importance of the radio programmes of the Department in their regions of the world. In that context, one delegation asked for the inclusion of the Nepali language, while another called for a more stable and regular arrangement for the production of Urdu radio programmes.

75. One delegation expressed its concern at the termination of the weekly television programme, which it regarded as a good cost-effective production. That delegation expressed the hope that an arrangement could be worked out with the Department to restore the programme.

76. One delegation denounced the radio and television aggression which one State was carrying out against its country and referred to the decision of the International Frequency Registration Board which considered illegitimate the

transmissions of a television channel in violation of the sovereignty of the radio electric space of that country. That representative expressed the view that United Nations information programmes produced for his country should concentrate on problems of development faced by those who lived in the third world. In that regard, that representative suggested that information related to indebtedness should be disseminated in creditor countries.

77. One delegation representing several others asked for the issuance of press releases containing General Assembly resolutions and decisions to be published in Arabic as well as in English and French.

78. Commenting on the assessment of needs for technical assistance to radio stations that are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa, 4/ one representative expressed strong disappointment that the Secretary-General in his report to the Committee had shifted the responsibility of finding the required funds to the front-line States, instead of coming up with the allocation of funds as was requested during the last session of the Committee.

79. Some delegations commended the Department for the work done to bring to the world's consciousness the economic plight of the African continent through the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (General Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex). In that regard, the publication Africa Recovery continued to play an invaluable role in that regard. The Department was, however, urged to deploy further efforts at wider circulation of the publication.

80. Some delegations emphasized the importance of the Department's training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries.

81. One delegation strongly supported the activities of the United Nations Correspondents' Association and urged the Department to extend all facilities to Association members in the discharge of their professional duties.

82. Another representative congratulated the Department on its encouragement of the promotion of women Professional staff in the Department. That delegation noted that the United Nations must be in the lead in that area of human endeavour.

83. Several delegations were encouraged by the initial results of the world-wide opinion polling programme which gave Member States some idea of the level of awareness of the United Nations in various member countries. One delegation suggested that the Department could explore the possibility of conducting opinion surveys on the benefits of United Nations activities, particularly in the economic, social, humanitarian and similar programmes implemented by the United Nations system in developing countries. In that connection, another delegation suggested that the Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit had a vital role to play in research on dissemination of information materials and on whether that material reached the end users. Yet another delegation suggested that the scope of the polling exercise should be expanded and undertaken on a continuous basis, with a view to ensuring the optimal use of the Department's resources.

84. Some delegations urged the Department to undertake further efforts with regard to equitable geographical distribution of posts. In that context, one

delegation suggested that the situation of a country being underrepresented, which often led to non-representation, should be avoided. That representative, whose country was still underrepresented, expressed disappointment that his country's efforts to have nationals recruited both within the Department and Secretariat-wide had not met with the necessary understanding. He suggested that the widest possible recruitment was the best means of enriching the Organization.

85. At the closing of the debate, the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information provided additional information on the work of the Department and responses to specific questions raised by delegations. She was very appreciative of the many compliments that had been paid to her and to the staff of the Department; noting that all comments made whether complimentary or critical served to inspire the Department to become an even more efficient and effective instrument for promoting the goals of the Organization and for disseminating information about its work and its purposes among the various audiences around the world.

86. Responding to the various questions raised on the United Nations information centres, the Under-Secretary-General said she looked forward to further discussions with Benin, Poland and Yemen regarding the opening of new information centres in their capitals. Requests for centres in Costa Rica and Bulgaria would be subject to further review in compliance with the established guidelines and the wishes of the Committee on Information.

87. With regard to coverage of one country by a centre, physically located in another capital, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the comments made by the representatives of Argentina and Jamaica would encourage the Department to try to explore with UNDP and interested Governments the possibility of outposting of information assistants who could be professionally supported by the Department and administratively supervised by UNDP.

88. The Department remained at the disposal of the Committee with regard to the issue of the location of information centres. However, on the points raised regarding the appointment of directors from developing countries to centres located in developed countries, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Department had broken fresh ground. The centre directors at Brussels, Madrid, Paris, Sydney, Tokyo and the United Nations Information Services, Geneva were all citizens of developing countries; that therefore meant that 6 out of 12 directors located in industrialized countries came from developing countries. On the other hand, 2 nationals of developed countries served in the 25 developing countries where there were full-time directors. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that the appointment of centre directors was subject to consultations with the host country.

89. Arrangements for host-country contributions towards financing of the centres were part of the agreements reached between the Department and each country in which an information centre operated. Given the Organization's financial constraints, the Under-Secretary-General expressed the view that such arrangements continued to be necessary. In that regard, she was appreciative of the efforts of the Government of Burundi regarding the premises of the centre there.

90. The Under-Secretary-General assured delegations that information centres headed by UNDP resident representatives had always been and would continue to be under the direct administration and management of the Department.

91. Recognizing that there were differences in the performance of individual centres, the Under-Secretary-General observed that they were due mainly to the professional experience of all staff and to the prevailing conditions in the region. In that regard, she assured the Committee that the Department had no problem with the centre at Bujumbura and saw no need for additional recruitment.

92. Responding to comments made by the representatives of Bangladesh and the United Republic of Tanzania, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the ceiling on Professional posts which had been imposed on the Department (including the Centres Division) had prevented the Department from placing internationally recruited full-time Directors as the Department or Governments might wish. In that regard, the Department was trying to cope with that situation by strengthening the role of the local staff and by establishing a more systematic briefing procedure for UNDP resident representatives.

93. Concerning the information centre in Khartoum, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Department had not only been able to maintain a full-time director, but also was able to meet its information requirements despite the difficult situation in that country over the past three years. Its activities had been well received and appreciated by government officials.

94. Regarding the termination of the weekly television programme in the Philippines, The UN Hour broadcast, the Department would be happy to facilitate its resumption. However, the Under-Secretary-General noted that among other things, a producer in the Philippines would be required and funding for such an endeavour would have to be provided externally.

95. Concerning the centre at Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Under-Secretary-General indicated that according to information received from the UNDP Resident Representative who served as the centre Director, the centre at Dhaka had never been more active and its information to local sources was widely publicized. The Department had learned that the local staff member responsible for disssemination of information had left the Service; the Department had initiated action to ensure that a well-qualified information assistant would be appointed as soon as possible.

96. The Under-Secretary-General expressed appreciation for the remarks of the representative of Lebanon and assured him that the Department would endeavour to provide the necessary post now that the security situation there had greatly improved.

97. With regard to centre activities in the field of radio production, the Under-Secretary-General expressed appreciation to the representative of Burundi and assured him that the Department would give serious consideration to his proposal. That included his suggestion for more direct cooperation between national television organizations and United Nations television.

98. Responding to references made by the representative of Mexico on the level of activities of the centre in Mexico City, the Under-Secretary-General

noted that the Centre Director had been called upon from time to time by the Secretary-General to provide temporary assistance to missions in Central American countries, such as Nicaragua and El Salvador. The Department had prepared a distinct information programme relating to peace-keeping missions in Central America as in other areas, but that had never been financially feasible at the time; hence the Secretary-General drew on the the Centre Director in Mexico City. Nevertheless, the Department would continue to strive for a separation of peace missions and the ensuring of the standard expected of the Centre's day-to-day performance. She further emphasized that the Department was aware of the need for a distinct information component and expressed the hope that the Committee would help the Department to press for making the financial means available for such missions.

99. Responding to the remarks of the representatives of Ecuador and Peru, that the Latin American region was overlooked in the activities of the Department as reflected in her opening speech to the Committee on Information, the Under-Secretary-General assured all the representatives of the countries of the Latin American region that the information programme in the field of international drug abuse control was one of the priorities of her Department. She informed representatives that feature series and backgrounders had been produced on the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 8/ the economic impact of drug trafficking, law enforcement, environmentally safe eradication of illict drug crops and the treatment and rehabilitation of drug users, among many other related subjects. Related public service announcements were being placed in major international news magazines and a travelling photo exhibition on the subject was being planned. She also noted that one third of the Department's "UN in Action" programmes contained material of interest to Latin American countries on a wide range of subjects such as debt, environmental degradation, poverty in urban centres and crime.

100. Concerning the issue that there had been no centre created in Latin America and the Caribbean since 1962, the Under-Secretary-General clarified that three centres had been created in Latin America and the Caribbean after 1962: at La Paz, Managua and Panama City.

101. The Department's willingness to expand its collaboration with Soviet television stations was expressed. With regard to the production of programmes in the Nepali language, the Under-Secretary-General also noted that the Department would be willing to expand further wherever possible and feasible, United Nations broadcasting in additional languages.

102. She also assured the representative of Pakistan that the Department would be looking into ways of providing a more direct service to Radio Pakistan bearing in mind a timely dispatch of that programme.

103. The Under-Secretary-General acknowledged that for the Asia/Pacific region the Department was not meeting the actual or theoretical mid-point for representation of different regions within its staff, according to Secretariat standard. The Under-Secretary-General affirmed that she was currently intensifying her efforts to convince delegations to submit suitable candidates - particularly women from that region - for externally advertised vacancies which might arise in the near future. She encouraged Governments to nominate women, especially from the regions of Eastern Europe and the Middle East, where the representation of the gender was below average.

104. With regard to the Secretary-General's report on the Yearbook of the United Nations, 5/ the Under-Secretary-General said she was encouraged by the support of delegations for the recommendations in the report. The Department would make every effort to implement the proposals without further delay or financial implications to the Department.

105. The Under-Secretary-General expressed appreciation for delegations' comments on the Department's world-wide public opinion polling programme about the United Nations. She noted that those comments would be taken by the Department as encouragement to continue its endeavours in assessing levels of awareness and knowledge about the Organization. Polls were planned for the current year in Brazil, Cuba, Senegal and Japan; one in Zimbabwe was currently under way. She also indicated that she would take up with the agencies of the Joint United Nations Information Committee the suggestion put forward by the delegation of Sri Lanka regarding the possibility of opinion surveys on the benefits of United Nations activities, particularly with regard to economic, social and humanitarian programmes.

106. Appreciation was expressed for the support of a number of delegations regarding the Department's need for maximum flexibility. The Under-Secretary-General also expressed the view that she favoured any pragmatic and informal approach for ongoing inter-sessional exchange between the Department and the Committee on Information regarding the Department's activities.

2. Preparation and adoption of the report of the Committee to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session

107. As indicated in paragraph 2 above, the Committee on Information established a working group and conducted further consultations through the spokesman of the regional groups, the Group of 77 and China.

108. At its 9th meeting, on 19 April 1991, the Committee considered recommendations of the working group, which contained draft resolutions to be submitted to the General Assembly. The Chairman read the text of an amendment to part B, paragraph (e) of the draft report, arrived at on the basis of consultations with interested delegations. The amendment was then approved by the Committee by consensus.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

109. The Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolutions:

Draft resolution I

Information in service of humanity

The General Assembly

Urges that all countries, organizations of the United Nations system as a whole and all others concerned, reaffirming their commitment to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and to the principles of freedom of the press and freedom of information, as well as to those of the independence, pluralism and diversity of the media, deeply concerned by the disparities existing between developed and developing countries and the consequences of every kind arising from those disparities that affect the capability of the public, private or other media and individuals in developing countries to disseminate information and communicate their views and their cultural and ethical values through endogenous cultural production, as well as to ensure the diversity of sources of and their free access to information, recognizing the call in this context for what in the United Nations and at various international forums has been termed "a new world information and communication order, seen as an evolving and continuous process", should:

(a) Cooperate and interact with a view to reducing existing disparities in information flows at all levels by increasing assistance for the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with due regard for their needs and the priorities attached to such areas by those countries, and in order to enable them and the public, private or other media in developing countries to develop their own information and communication policies freely and independently and increase the participation of media and individuals in the communication process, and to ensure a free flow of information at all levels;

(b) Ensure for journalists the free and effective performance of their professional tasks and condemn resolutely all attacks against them;

(c) Provide support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes for broadcasters and journalists from public, private and other media in developing countries;

(d) Enhance regional efforts and cooperation among developing countries, as well as cooperation between developed and developing countries, to strengthen communication capacities and to improve the media infrastructure and communication technology in the developing countries, especially in the areas of training and dissemination of information;

(e) Aim, in addition to bilateral cooperation, at providing all possible support and assistance to the developing countries and the media, public, private or other, in the developing countries, with due regard to their

interests and needs in the field of information and to action already adopted within the United Nations system, including:

(i) The development of the human and technical resources that are indispensable for the improvement of information and communication systems in developing countries and support for the continuation and strengthening of practical training programmes, such as those already operating under both public and private auspices throughout the developing world;

(ii) The creation of conditions that will enable developing countries and the media, public, private or other, in developing countries, to have, by using their national and regional resources, the communication technology suited to their national needs, as well as the necessary programme material, especially for radio and television broadcasting;

(iii) Assistance in establishing and promoting telecommunication links at the subregional, regional and interregional levels, especially among developing countries;

(iv) The facilitation, as appropriate, of access by the developing countries to advanced communication technology available on the open market;

(f) Provide full support for the International Programme for the Development of Communication of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which should support both public and private media.

Draft resolution II

United Nations public information policies and activities

The General Assembly

1. Calls upon the Secretary-General, in respect of United Nations public information policies and activities, to implement the following recommendations, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions:

(a) The United Nations system as a whole should cooperate in a concerted manner, through its information services and the coordination of the Joint United Nations Information Committee, in promoting a more comprehensive and realistic image of the activities and potential of the United Nations system in all its endeavours, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, with particular emphasis on the creation of a climate of confidence, the strengthening of multilateralism and the promotion of the development activities in the United Nations system;

(b) Reaffirming the primary role of the General Assembly in elaborating, coordinating and harmonizing United Nations policies and activities in the field of information, the Secretary-General is requested to ensure that the activities of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, as the focal point of the public information tasks of the United Nations, are strengthened and improved, keeping in view the purposes and principles of the Charter, the priority areas defined by the Assembly and the recommendations of the Committee on Information, so as to ensure an objective and more coherent coverage of, as well as better knowledge about, the United Nations and its work. The Secretary-General should ensure that the Department of Public Information:

(i) Cooperates more regularly with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, especially at the working level, with a view to maximizing the contribution of the Department to the efforts of the organization; and expresses interest in the continuation of the practice of a comprehensive statement by a representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at each substantive session of the Committee on Information;

(ii) Enhances its cooperation with news agencies of and in the developing countries, in particular the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, the Eco-Pool of the News Agencies of Non-Aligned Countries and the Broadcasting Organization of Non-Aligned Countries, as well as with other news agencies and intergovernmental and regional organizations;

(iii) Continues to disseminate, in coordination with the information services of other relevant agencies, information about United Nations activities pertaining, inter alia, to:

a. International peace and security;

b. Disarmament;

c. Peace-keeping operations;

d. Decolonization and the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, in the light of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism;

e. The elimination of foreign occupation;

f. Human rights;

g. The elimination of all forms of racial discrimination;

h. The advancement of the status of women and their role in society;

i. The problems of economic and social development, as well as international economic cooperation aimed at resolving external debt problems;

j. The least developed countries;

k. The environment and development;

l. The campaign against terrorism in all its forms, bearing in mind General Assembly resolution 40/61 of 9 December 1985;

m. The international fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking;

(iv) Does its utmost to disseminate widely and to publicize the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the tremendous efforts of the African countries towards recovery and development, as well as the positive response by the international community to alleviate the serious economic situation prevailing in Africa;

(v) Enhances the effectiveness of its activities and the dissemination of information on United Nations activities against the policies and practices of apartheid, giving due attention to the unilateral measures and official censorship imposed on the local and international media with regard to all aspects of that issue;

(vi) Continues to disseminate information about activities of the United Nations directed at a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of international conflicts by exclusively peaceful means, as highlighted in the Secretary-General's report on the work of the Organization;

(vii) Continues to cover all United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine in particular, and current developments in that region, and report thereon to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session, in 1992;

(viii) In situations requiring immediate and special response, provides the necessary level of information support for the activities of the United Nations;

(c) The Department of Public Information should continue its efforts in promoting an informed understanding of the work and purposes of the United Nations system among the peoples of the world and in strengthening the image of the United Nations system as a whole and, in this connection, it is recommended that the Secretary-General should ensure that the Department:

(i) Continues to maintain consistent editorial independence and accuracy in reporting all the material that it produces, taking necessary measures to ensure that its output contains adequate, objective and equitable information about issues before the Organization, reflecting divergent opinions where they occur;

(ii) Continues to apply, in the context of the review of its role, performance and methods of work, appropriate modern technologies for the collection, production, storage, dissemination and distribution of information materials, including the use of satellite facilities;

(iii) Considers expanding the programme of telephone news bulletins that are paid for by its users;

(iv) Continues its cooperation with those countries which have expressed readiness to assist the United Nations in resuming short-wave broadcasts through their respective national networks free of charge and encourages expansion of such a type of cooperation with those developed and developing countries having recognized capabilities in this field;

(v) Takes adequate measures to resume the taped radio programmes, which it has temporarily curtailed, if so requested by broadcasting stations;

(vi) Continues its briefing, assistance and orientation programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries focused on United Nations-related issues;

(vii) Provides, on the basis of its activities, information to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization about new forms of cooperation, at the regional and subregional levels, for the training of media professionals and for the improvement of the information and communication infrastructure of developing countries;

(viii) Cooperates with educational institutions of Member States and with educators and education policy makers, informing them about United Nations activities;

(ix) Considers as of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the publication, in the Arabic and Spanish languages, of the annual press release containing the resolutions and decisions, and the results of the voting adopted by the General Assembly, after each annual session of the General Assembly;

(x) Ensures adequate daily coverage of United Nations open meetings in the two working languages of the Secretariat, reflecting the views of all delegations with accuracy and objectivity. The Department should also continue to cooperate closely with and provide assistance to members of the United Nations Correspondents' Association, taking into account their needs and requirements, especially in the area of press releases, press conferences and briefings, which provide them with basic information for reporting;

(xi) Uses the official languages of the United Nations adequately in its written and audio-visual materials and makes balanced use of the two working languages of the Secretariat;

(xii) Ensures timely distribution of its material to subscribers and to United Nations information centres;

(d) The Department of Public Information should produce and distribute its publications in a timely manner:

(i) The improvement in format and printing of the UN Chronicle is welcome. The Department is encouraged to continue to consider the interest of specific target audiences as it formulates its editorial policies; and take action to expand its circulation in order to make it easily accessible;

(ii) Notes the report of the Secretary-General on the Yearbook of the United Nations and shares the assessment of the Secretary-General regarding unacceptable delays in the publication of the Yearbook. The Committee recommends continuation of the Yearbook and stresses the continuing importance of maintaining the strict editorial independence, objectivity and comprehensiveness of the Yearbook and requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the report, particularly as regards paragraphs 66 and 67;

(e) Taking note of the Secretary-General's report of 15 February 1991, and recalling his report on assistance to those front-line States broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa, requests the Secretary-General to assist to the greatest extent possible, those front-line States in pursuing their concerns in the light of paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report of 15 February 1991;

(f) The Secretary-General is urged to continue his efforts to secure a sound and stable financial basis for the publications Development Forum and Africa Recovery;

(g) It is recognized that United Nations information centres constitute an important means of disseminating information about the United Nations among the people of the world. Therefore, the Department should conduct periodic evaluation of the efficiency of each centre in disseminating information about the United Nations, through the national media, information and educational institutions and non-governmental organizations. The evaluation should be used by the Committee to develop a broad framework in relation to the range of functions of the centres taking into account the United Nations resources, and requirements of the regions;

(h) The Department should coordinate closely with other field offices of the United Nations system, particularly those of the United Nations Development Programme, in order to avoid duplication of work, taking into account the functional autonomy that the United Nations information centres

should have. In this respect, the Department should, in countries where no local United Nations information centre exists, ensure that adequate information about the United Nations is provided. In addition, the Department should develop a framework for coordinating the information work carried out by the United Nations offices and officers serving in those countries where no United Nations information centre exists;

(i) Recognizing that the United Nations information centres have been called upon to undertake tasks beyond their specific mandate upon the request of other organizations in the system, the Department should make every effort, where this is felt necessary, to seek reimbursement so that it can carry out the tasks without impairing its effectiveness in its specific duties;

(j) Requests the Secretary-General to study ways of ensuring a qualitative balance among United Nations information centres all over the world with respect to the discharge of their responsibilities, budget allocations for such centres, the deployment of resources, and services of specialists in the field of information, and to report to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session;

(k) Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at all sessions of the Committee on the budget of each of the United Nations information centres, including detailed information on the level of assistance being provided by the host countries;

(l) Taking note of the request for the enhancing of the United Nations information centres in Tehran, Dar es Salaam, Dhaka and Bujumbura, the Committee on Information recommends that the Department of Public Information provide the necessary professionals and equipment where necessary;

(m) The Committee on Information recommends that, pending final discussions with the Secretariat, the General Assembly consider approval of the establishment of a new United Nations information centre in San'a, Yemen. The Committee takes note of the requests of Costa Rica and Bulgaria to have information components in their countries;

(n) Stressing the need for coordinating the information activities of the United Nations system and recognizing the important role that the Joint United Nations Information Committee plays in that regard, the Department of Public Information is encouraged to continue its active participation in the work of the Committee;

(o) Taking into account the conclusion reached at the sixteenth session of the Joint United Nations Information Committee that the environment would presently constitute the highest priority issue suitable for inter-agency cooperation, the Department of Public Information should further pursue discussion of the implementation of a system-wide information programme for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

(p) It is recognized that free distribution of materials is necessary in the public information activities of the United Nations. However, as demands increase and whenever it is desirable and possible, the Department of Public Information should actively encourage the sale of its materials;

(q) In view of the importance of radio programmes in developing countries, the Secretary-General is requested to enhance the efficiency of and to ensure full programme delivery by all regional radio units, namely, the African, Asian, Caribbean, European, Latin American and Middle Eastern Units and the Anti-Apartheid Programmes Section, including production of radio programmes called for by General Assembly resolution 38/82 B of 15 December 1983;

(r) All reports by the Secretary-General, as well as by representatives of the Department of Public Information, to the Committee on Information and to the General Assembly, in particular on new programmes or on the expansion of existing programmes, should contain:

(i) Detailed information on the output of the Department on each topic included in its work programme, which forms the basis of its programme budget;

(ii) The costs of the activities undertaken on each topic;

(iii) Adequate information on target audiences, end-use of the products of the Department and analysis of feedback data received by it;

(iv) A statement detailing the priority level that the Secretary-General has attached to current or future activities of the Department in documents dealing with such activities;

(v) Evaluation by the Department of the effectiveness of its different programmes and activities, with particular reference to the need constantly to review internal programme elements and activities;

(s) In order to facilitate continued contact between the Department of Public Information and the Committee on Information between sessions, it is recommended that the Bureau of the Committee on Information, together with representatives of each regional group and China, in close contact with members of the Committee on Information should meet, as required, and consult at periodic intervals with the Department of Public Information;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to implement the recommendations relating to the activities of the Department of Public Information in accordance with the budgetary procedures as approved by the General Assembly in its resolution 41/213 of 19 December 1986, 42/211 of 21 December 1987, 43/213 of 21 December 1988 and 44/200 B of 21 December 1989, 45/254 of 21 December 1990 and taking into account the priorities set by the Assembly;

3. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session in 1992 on the implementation of a system-wide information programme for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development;

4. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session in 1992 on the activities of the Department of Public Information and on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the present resolution;

5. Invites Member States to submit observations and suggestions by 1 February 1992 to the Secretary-General, on ways and means of furthering the development of communication infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with a view to consolidating recent experience in the field of international cooperation aimed at enabling the developing countries to develop their own information and communication capacities, freely and independently, and further requests the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session;

6. Urges the Committee on Information through its Bureau and the representatives of each regional group and China, to work in close contact with the Joint United Nations Information Committee in order to facilitate United Nations information system cooperation and coordination in informing the peoples of the world of the Organization's aims and activities; also requests the Secretary-General to submit reports of the Joint United Nations Information Committee to the consecutive sessions of the Committee on Information;

7. Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution;

8. Requests the Committee on Information to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session;

9. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its forty-seventh session the item entitled "Questions relating to information".

110. Also at its 9th meeting, the Committee decided, by consensus, to recommend to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Draft decision

Increase in the membership of the Committee on Information

111. The General Assembly decides to increase the membership of the Committee on Information from 78 to 79 members and decides to appoint Burkina Faso as a member of the Committee on Information.

V. STATEMENTS FOLLOWING ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

112. The representative of Costa Rica expressed her reservations regarding the second sentence of operative paragraph 1 (m) of draft resolution II. The delegation would have preferred the sentence to read as follows: "The Committee recommends also, that the requests of Costa Rica and Bulgaria be considered for the establishment of information centres in those countries".

113. The representatives of Bulgaria requested in the same connection that the term "information component" should have been replaced by the word "information centres".

114. The representative of Iran called attention to the report of the Secretary-General on the question of Palestine. 3/ He noted that another expression was used in this document contrary to the recent Secretariat conventional practice referring to the current geographical situation describing the waterways from Iran to the Persian Gulf as "the Persian Gulf", wherever it appears in its documentation. He requested that a correction of these errors be published.

115. The representative of Cuba requested that his delegation's position should be placed on record with regards to differentiation made between resolutions which were adopted by consensus and those that were not. That delegation noted that once decisions had been adopted, no matter what the machinery, they were resolutions of the General Assembly. He noted further that a decision or resolution adopted by a vote or by consensus should have equal weight. He said the Committee on Information therefore should try to ensure that selective treatment of resolutions should no longer be in effect.

116. The Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Committee was scheduled for 30 March to 16 April 1992.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/35/21), annex, sect. V.

2/ Ibid., Thirty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/36/21); ibid., Thirty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/37/21 and Corr.1); ibid., Thirty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/38/21 and Corr.1 and 2); ibid., Thirty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/39/21); ibid., Fortieth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/40/21); ibid., Forty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/41/21); ibid., Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/42/21); ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/43/21); ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/44/21).

3/ A/AC.198/1991/4.

4/ A/AC.198/1991/5.

5/ A/AC.198/1991/6.

6/ A/AC.198/1991/3.

7/ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Records of the General Conference, Twenty-first Session, vol. I, Resolutions, sect. III.4, resolution 4/21.

8/ E/CONF.82/15 and Corr.2.

ANNEX I

Statement by the Chairman of the Committee on Information at the opening of its thirteenth session

It is a pleasure and an honour for me to be in New York again, this time as Chairman of the Committee on Information.

I am pleased to find myself among the many friends with whom I have worked for years to ensure that this important Committee performs its mandate effectively and efficiently.

Above all, I should like to thank the members of the Committee on Information for having placed their trust in me by electing me as Chairman. I hope I will not disappoint them, and I shall try to interpret your wishes faithfully at all times.

I should like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election. I am sure that we will all work together as a team and cooperate in an effective, efficient and friendly manner.

In keeping with tradition, I should like to assure the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, Mrs. Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, and the members of the Department of Public Information that the officers of the Committee will be at your entire disposal. I already know that I can count on the permanent support and assistance of the members of the Secretariat.

I should also like to welcome the four new members of the Committee on Information. The participation of Czechoslovakia, Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay as of this thirteenth session gives the Committee even more standing.

Last year, 1990, was an important year for the Committee on Information. At its twelfth session, the Committee made substantial progress which is bound to facilitate our future work.

I do not intend to dwell on the past; I have come here ready to look to the future and to continue building on the achievements and progress of recent years.

I believe that an important chapter in the debate on the new world information and communication order was closed in 1990 and should not be re-opened.

The Committee on Information has many specific issues to deal with and these must be the central focus of the information debate in the coming years. The 1990 consensus must be used to achieve tangible results benefiting, in particular, countries most disadvantaged in the areas of information and communication. The Committee must also deal systematically with those areas of its mandate related to the Department of Public Information.

In our work, we must focus on analysing specific issues and try to detect specific problems and opportunities existing in the sphere of the Department of Public Information. More specifically, I believe that our challenge is to work ... practical recommendations really benefiting those countries whose information and communication structures are most deficient.

All areas of the Department perform noteworthy functions which are mutually reinforcing and must be analysed as a whole. However, I should like to refer to one area in particular, not because it is more important than the others but because of its impact on the Department's budget. The United Nations information centres are one of the cornerstones of not only the Department but also the United Nations as a whole. The 67 centres currently in operation around the world are having to fulfil an increasingly important function and it is therefore necessary and important that all Governments should continue to support them. In this connection, it would be extremely useful if the centres could receive financial support from all Governments, as this would greatly facilitate their operation.

Another topic which the Committee ought to tackle in order to make a definite contribution is that of the information and communication infrastructures of developing countries. Obviously, the Committee on Information must not duplicate UNESCO or the International Programme for the Development of Communication. However, it would be useful if the Committee were to identify those specific areas in which the Department of Public Information can help countries whose information and communication infrastructures are most deficient. It would also be useful if countries which are in a position to provide technical or financial inputs were to cooperate in this effort. This would make it possible to make progress on specific issues and reap tangible benefits without imposing a further budgetary burden on the Department or redirecting funds away from other programmes. Accordingly, I formally invite countries to make known, for instance through their regional spokespersons, their concerns and problems and also their genuine desire to cooperate in solving them. Let us not look for magic, instant solutions; let us begin to work on specific issues, aiming at all times for cooperation and understanding.

Another issue which I feel bound to raise here is that of recommendations. In recent years, considerable progress has been made towards drafting fewer, more specific recommendations. I think that the Committee should continue on this course and gradually try to present to the General Assembly recommendations which are even more specific, containing viable guidelines for the functioning of the Department of Public Information. In the past, the Committee often failed to reach a consensus precisely because its recommendations were unworkable. That is why I consider it necessary to intensify the dialogue with the Department of Public Information so that we can benefit from the Secretariat's technical advice at all times. We must maximize our human and financial resources at all times, and the Department's input and cooperation are essential to this.

In this connection, the officers of the Committee have decided to circulate as a working paper the recommendations adopted last year. This year, we should engage in an exercise of imagination and responsibility and monitor the recommendations to see which of them have been implemented and, if not, why not. We must show ourselves capable of self-criticism and be prepared to discard any recommendations which cannot be implemented.

The year 1990 marked the end of a chapter in the Committee's work. It was a difficult, arduous and often unrewarding period, but we had to go through it in order to overcome our differences.

Henceforth, we must take a different approach and try to make progress on specific issues, giving them substance and avoiding the rhetoric which so often characterized our debates in the past.

I am convinced that this is the correct course and that the challenge is a worthy one which the members of the Committee are able to take up.

ANNEX II

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the Secretary-General to the thirteenth session of the Committee on Information. On behalf of the Secretariat I join you in greeting our newest members of the Committee - the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica and Uruguay.

May I also personally welcome you, Mr. Chairman. With your vast experience and active participation in the work of this Committee, I am sure that the Department of Public Information will be given strong support and the necessary guidance in its continuing efforts to advance the public information activities of the United Nations. I wish to assure you, the Members of the Bureau and the Committee as a whole, of my commitment and that of my staff, to giving you the necessary assistance for an effective and successful session.

I shall focus in my statement on an overview of the work of the Department of Public Information during the inter-sessional period, highlighting some of our major endeavours. Also, I will introduce briefly the reports which the Secretary-General has been called upon to present to this Committee.

We meet at an interesting juncture in history, as the climate in international relations is rapidly improving. We have witnessed the momentous changes in Eastern Europe, the unification of Germany, the signs of changes in South Africa, and the rapprochement in the global political environment, which allowed for adoption of resolutions on the recent situation in the Gulf. In order to respond, in information terms, to the challenges posed by these events, the Department has had to adjust its programmes and the limited resources at its disposal. We have had to comply with the mandates given to us by the General Assembly and at the same time respond to late-breaking events in which the Organization has an important role to fulfil.

The crisis in the Gulf and the ensuing involvement of the Security Council resulted in a great deal of media attention being focused on the United Nations. The developments after the cessation of hostilities and the launching of humanitarian relief operations in the Gulf have continued to sustain enormous press interest. This, in turn, has kept demands on the Department at an all-time high. During the reporting period, we accredited 4,139 journalists who came to cover the meetings of the Security Council on the Gulf crisis and the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, and 3,500 media representatives who came to cover the World Summit for Children.

The increased press activities at Headquarters have also resulted in a corresponding rise in the demand for services. The invasion and annexation of Kuwait by Iraq and the resultant adoption by the Security Council of a dozen resolutions between 2 August and 29 November put the United Nations at the top of the news world wide during that period. In his efforts to find a peaceful solution to the conflict, the Secretary-General undertook two missions to the region - one to Amman in August and the second to Baghdad in January. These major news events focused press attention on the Secretary-General himself.

The search for a cease-fire agreement and the launching of humanitarian relief operations in the Gulf kept the news focus on the United Nations in the post-war period.

The first responsibility of the Executive Media Service is to manage press relations for the Secretary-General. When he is in New York, the staff monitor his movements in and out of Headquarters, which in recent months has been necessary morning, noon and night. The press often position themselves at the Secretariat entrance or even at the official residence in the hope of getting the Secretary-General to comment on the issue of the day. Our staff stay with him, and record and transcribe any comments he makes to the press to guard against misquotation.

Demand for formal interviews with the Secretary-General has increased sharply and the Secretary-General has granted a much higher number of them. Again, we act as the intermediary between the press and the Secretary-General, screening these requests, advising the Secretary-General on them, scheduling the interviews and sitting in on them. From April 1990 through mid-January 1991, the Department had to process in excess of 300 requests for formal interviews, of which the Secretary-General granted 40.

When the Secretary-General travels abroad, a staff member accompanies him, while the rest of the staff provide support from Headquarters. The Secretary-General is briefed regularly on world news developments. Interviews or press conferences are arranged as required. The staff member stays in regular contact with Headquarters. From April through January this year, the Secretary-General travelled 79 days, always accompanied by at least one staff member.

It has become the established practice for the President of the Security Council to rely on the Spokesperson's office to handle press relations for the Council. These functions include issuing statements on behalf of the Council President, informing the press of the President's activities, and publicizing all Council meetings and consultations. In order to meet requests from the media during the crisis in the Gulf, all Council proceedings, including the activities of its Sanctions Committee, had to be followed by our staff. Over the last eight months, many staff members of my Department have had to work seven days a week, sometimes late into the night.

The events since 2 August in the Gulf and the World Summit for Children, which took place in New York last September, in particular stretched to the maximum the Department's resources. I am proud to report that we were able successfully to meet the enormous demands by the media and the general public. I take this opportunity to place on record my deep appreciation to all the staff of the Department of Public Information, both at Headquarters and abroad, who have contributed to our successful year. Our work during the reporting period has been characterized by extraordinary efforts and a high degree of diligence on the part of our writers and editors, our camera people, radio officers and photographers, our media liaison officers and support staff and, last but not least, by many of our colleagues in the information centres and services.

The Department has continued to expand and strengthen its ties with media representatives in the various geographical regions of the world by conducting

editors' roundtables at Headquarters and launching outreach programmes for media practitioners. In November 1990, we organized in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, a three-day editors' roundtable with senior United Nations officials, for media representatives from 13 Asian countries. The topics ranged from regional political issues, such as the situations in Afghanistan and Cambodia, to the complex issues of disarmament and economic and social questions. Preparations are now under way for a roundtable at which journalists from both Eastern and Western Europe will participate. This fall, the Department will once again conduct the annual training programme for 15 broadcasters and journalists from developing countries.

It is with satisfaction that I can report an increase in the region of one fifth of United Nations radio and television programmes broadcast by major stations around the world, since January 1990. Working closely with radio and television associations such as the African National Radio and Television Union, the International Radio and Television Organization in Europe and Asia, and the Pacific Broadcasting Union and the Arab States Broadcasting Union in the Middle East, the Department has gained direct access to a large number of radio and television organizations among them ORTS - Office de la Radio et Télévision Sénégalaise. United Nations programmes can not only be watched every Sunday on CNN's World Report, but they will also be part of the programming of NHK Japan, Soviet Television, and Senegalese Television, among others. Our electronic magazines and features service - both radio and television - is an equal partner on a project on the "History of the Twentieth Century" with the largest networks world wide: ABC in the United States, NHK in Japan and Gosteleradio in the Soviet Union. We see this as further evidence of the newly gained high visibility of the Organization in the world.

We distribute television materials through One World Channel, which broadcasts from Norway by satellite throughout Europe into 15 million homes. We have made arrangements for "World Chronicle", a programme originally intended for North American audiences, to be shown also to European audiences. We continue to transmit on a daily basis information items, primarily on economic and social matters, to the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries, through the Yugoslav news agency TANJUG. We are presently arranging with another major wire service for the electronic dissemination of press releases on United Nations events through its wire service. This close cooperation with major media organizations has become an essential element of the Department's activities and strategies.

Information materials are regularly sent to United Nations information centres, UNDP field offices, United Nations agencies, the media, diplomatic and academic communities, non-governmental organizations, depositary and parliamentary libraries, UNESCO-associated schools and very often to the general public. It is pleasant to note that several national media outlets have committed themselves to guarantee access to space for United Nations print or broadcast information materials.

During the reporting period, a computerized contact mailing list has been developed to improve the targeting of the Department's products and to help in better planning of production and dissemination of printed materials. We believe that efficient and prompt delivery is an absolute necessity in the highly competitive information market.

Partnership with international publishing houses is another part of our efforts to reach specific audiences. Important studies produced by the United Nations and its specialized agencies are made available to academic, scientific and business communities in many different languages. In the past year alone, 24 projects were implemented, including such topical studies as "Climate and Development". Their real value is in the contribution they make to the image of the United Nations among policy makers, academicians and researchers.

Looking at our priority issues, the Department continues its promotional campaigns on such subjects as: anti-apartheid, peace-keeping and peace-making, disarmament, decolonization, human rights, as well as economic and social questions. Here I can only give examples of the multimedia promotional efforts on these issues.

In a forward-looking approach to the ultimate eradication of apartheid, seven language versions of a poster "For a United, Non-Racial and Democratic South Africa" were produced and distributed on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March. A special exhibit of these posters was held in Paris.

As part of its information activities in the field of disarmament, the Department prepared, in consultation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, a comprehensive press kit on the occasion of the Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held at Geneva from 20 August to 14 September 1990. An information kit was also prepared on the occasion of the Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, which took place at Headquarters from 7 to 18 January 1991.

The Department mounted extensive press coverage of the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana; the seminars by the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, held in Vanuatu and Barbados; the seminars and symposia by the Committee on the rights of the Palestinian people, held in Kuala Lumpur, Stockholm, Geneva, Buenos Aires and Freetown; the Geneva Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries; the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Nairobi; and the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a framework convention on climate change held in February this year, near Washington, D.C.

In the area of peace-keeping, the Department issued the second edition of The Blue Helmets, in close collaboration with the Office for Special Political Affairs. This 450-page book contains a detailed account of all United Nations peace-keeping operations, past and present, and represents an essential reference to those interested in the subject. The Department also produced a new version of the pamphlet "United Nations Peace-Keeping". This colour publication is intended mainly for the general public and provides basic information on the United Nations concept of peace-keeping, a complete

listing of United Nations peace-keeping operations, and facts and figures about existing operations in the field.

The Department prepared a number of feature articles which have captured world-wide attention, on the United Nations efforts in the Central American peace process, the elections in Nicaragua and Haiti, and the role of the good offices of the Secretary-General in the negotiations towards peace in Cambodia.

In this connection, I wish to inform the Committee that the Department has developed standards for incorporating information programmes as a component of peace-keeping operations. These standards have been approved by the relevant Departments in the Secretariat for use in future operations.

In November 1990, in response to public demand, the Department produced a reference paper containing all the resolutions of the Security Council relating to the situation between Iraq and Kuwait and, since then, with the passing of each subsequent resolution has issued updated versions.

Last month, the Department organized, jointly with the Institute of Policy Studies of Singapore and also with the support of the Government of Japan, a major symposium on "The changing role of the United Nations in conflict resolution and peace-keeping". It was held in Singapore from 13 to 15 March 1991, and was co-chaired by Professor Tommy Koh, Director of the Institute and by Mr. Hisashi Owada, Deputy Foreign Minister of Japan. The purpose of the symposium was to exchange ideas and generate a better public understanding of the evolving role of the United Nations in conflict resolution, peace-keeping and regional security efforts. Participants included experts from the United Nations as well as academics, journalists and other specialists.

In light of the General Assembly objective of complete decolonization by the year 2000, the Department continues its information programmes in this field. Among products we have produced are a video "About the United Nations: Decolonization" and a teaching guide that will accompany it. Also, we are currently finalizing a booklet entitled "Decolonization: the Task Ahead". To highlight the ongoing work of the United Nations on this question, a special issue of Objective: Justice devoted to decolonization was produced in 1990.

Our journal Africa Recovery, which keeps the policy makers, media and interested non-governmental organizations abreast of major economic developments that affect the African continent, has established itself as a periodical of record on this issue. A briefing paper on African least developed countries, published in English and French, was extensively reflected in the media of many countries. In the last few months, the Department has written articles on the need to maintain support for African economic development, highlighting the reform efforts of African countries and the need for investment capital and debt relief.

In cooperation with UNDP, the Department organized a tour with 31 senior journalists from prominent newspapers - including African newspapers - to Tanzania and Togo. The tour provided the journalists with the opportunity to meet the Presidents of both countries and to have a first-hand experience of the economic and social challenges confronting African countries.

Mr. Chairman, we are giving high priority to our efforts to promote awareness of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. A pre-conference pamphlet is now being distributed in English and will be released in other official languages and Portuguese later this month. Materials are also being prepared for use in schools. Planning has begun for six radio documentaries and print backgrounders to be produced in a series entitled "Earth Summit in Focus". Information activities will also be undertaken with United Nations information centres for meeting local information needs. Among the Department's information plans for publicizing this important Conference are agreements with several television companies to co-produce video programmes for television broadcast. In this regard, I should note that the plan for coverage of the conference was drawn up within the framework of standards for conference coverage, which the Department has developed.

The Department continues to give priority to information activities on the advancement of the status of women and their role in society. As part of that effort, I was priviledged to be invited to address the First World Summit on Women held in Montreal, Canada, on 5 June 1990 and the International Forum on Women's Global Role, held on 4 September 1990, in Osaka, Japan. At the request of the Commission on the Status of Women, the Department has begun a world-wide campaign to increase awareness of the obstacles in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. We are focusing on areas such as equality in political participation and decision-making and the advancement of women in education, employment and health.

The Department's Inter-agency Advisory Group on Activities for Women under my chairmanship this year initiated the production by the Department of a "United Nations Calendar of Women's Activities 1991", which was released on 8 March in commemoration of International Women's Day. The calendar highlights selected events, conferences, symposia, expert group meetings and training programmes on women, which are being held by United Nations organizations during 1991. We look forward to even greater inter-agency cooperation on this important issue in the future.

As the Department continues coverage of the women's issue, I wish to mention that more than 300 radio organizations world wide receive on a regular basis the Department's radio magazine "Women" which is produced in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

The Department has continued its efforts in building awareness of the problem of international drug trafficking. The entry into force last November of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was highlighted by a press conference at Headquarters. Currently, the Department is continuing to place public service announcements on United Nations drug control efforts in major news magazines. A new 30-minute documentary film on the drug problem is nearing completion, and work is also under way to produce a new photo exhibit on the subject.

On crime prevention, the Department has publicized relevant United Nations activities and resolutions through its press releases on the meetings of the General Assembly and the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, held last August in

Havana. A press kit prepared for the Congress contained a review of the main issues concerning control of terrorist activities and a revised version of the Department's booklet "The United Nations and Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice" will reflect the masures against international terrorism adopted by the Congress.

In light of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights, the Department, over the last year, has given special emphasis to its activities in this important field. We have released 14 pamphlets and brochures on human rights issues in eight languages. Meetings and events related to human rights received extensive radio and television coverage. Several feature articles produced on this subject in English, French and Spanish have been distributed to the media and through the network of information centres.

A film production of the Department, "Brushstrokes", on prejudice and the elimination of all forms of discrimination, won international awards at festivals in New York and in Bilbao, Spain. The film is currently being shown at international festivals in Europe and in Australia. We will also shortly complete a 30-minute documentary film on the work of the United Nations in the field of human rights, as well as an educational video and accompanying teaching guide on children's rights.

In my own speaking engagements in different countries of the world, I have tried to reflect repeatedly the ideas contained in the new approach on information and communications questions adopted both by the United Nations and UNESCO. As I look at our agenda, I feel compelled to mention that the consensus reached in the Committee last year has facilitated our cooperation with UNESCO.

We are currently, together with UNESCO and in cooperation with UNDP as well as a number of development agencies from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden organizing a major conference which will bring together African journalists, media representatives and practitioners, entrepreneurs and policy makers in information, to discuss the broader implications of an independent and pluralistic press in Africa. The conference is scheduled to take place in Windhoek, Namibia later this month. I am exploring a possibility to organize a similar seminar for the countries of Eastern Europe.

The Department recognizes the important and constructive role of non-governmental organizations in furthering the purposes and principles of the United Nations. We are cooperating today with almost 1,200 non-profit citizens' organizations from nearly 100 countries in building public understanding and support for the activities of the United Nations. At the Department's annual non-governmental organizations conference last year, a record 1,100 non-governmental organizations from 48 countries attended to discuss "A World Safe for Children". The role assumed by these organizations during the World Summit for Children is only one example of their valuable contribution to our goals by drawing attention to issues, suggesting ideas and disseminating information to promote an informed understanding about questions before the United Nations. The theme for this year's conference which is scheduled from 11 to 13 September, is: "Peace, Justice and Development: Ingredients for an Emerging World Order".

I was also very pleased to address recently an important information meeting that the Department co-sponsored in Moscow with the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, held under the theme "The UN towards the Year 2000". The three-day meeting which was also addressed by other senior United Nations officials attracted over 300 representatives of 80 non-governmental organizations from all Soviet Republics and might be a successful model for future regional meetings with non-governmental organizations.

As part of its international outreach programme, the Department has embarked on new initiatives with the aim of reaching wider audiences around the world through generating positive publicity for the United Nations. Recently, in partnership with the International Advertising Association, the Department gave recognition for the first time to the best pro-bono campaign addressing a United Nations-related issue. The Department will also recognize the best public affairs campaign among the membership of the International Public Relations Association of some 90 countries around the world. A further initiative in this regard is a public service advertising campaign which will be inaugurated this fall, in cooperation with the Affiliated Advertising Agencies International, in some 70 countries around the world. This project seeks to encourage popular understanding and support for the United Nations.

Another of the Department's new directions has been the preparation of a public service advertisement prepared for leading magazines around the world. Last year the Department was successful in obtaining some publicity in this regard by having print advertisements on drugs and women publicized in the following magazines: Business Week, The Nation, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated and Time Magazine. At the same time, the Department continues to place posters in major airports throughout North America as well as on buses, subways and railroads in its efforts to promote visits to the United Nations. In addition, through the good offices of the United Nations information centres, it has been possible to place the posters in cities throughout the world. Furthermore, the inflight magazines of several major international air carriers with regular service to New York - among them, United, Continental and Pan Am - now provide publicity about United Nations guided tours at no charge to the Organization.

The Department is also very aware of the ongoing need to update its information and keep the public's interest in the Organization alive. As part of this effort, the Department has just completed a 22-minute video cassette, in colour, entitled "United Nations for a Better Future". This new feature takes a fast-paced look at the United Nations as it enters its fifth decade. It also takes a close-up view at life in the field showing the impact that the Organization has had on the daily lives of individuals. It is hoped, that as a result of the wide spectrum of United Nations activities covered globally by the video, it will attract a broad-based audience world wide including students and non-governmental organizations to whom we believe this would be particularly useful.

Services to the public are another component of the Department's activities. These include: organizing briefings, conducting guided tours at United Nations Headquarters in New York, Geneva and Vienna, and responding to public inquiries. Over 700 briefings on various topics were arranged at Headquarters, mostly for high school and university groups. Outside speaking

engagements, thanks to modern telecommunications, reached audiences substantially larger than during the previous year. Close to half a million people took the guided tour, in which guides explained the current activities of the United Nations, as well as provided basic information on the Organization. In terms of public inquiries, the crisis in the Gulf had a dramatic effect as well, causing the number of requests for information to more than double. For the months of August to December 1990 alone, the Public Services Section at Headquarters responded to 6,337 letters and 11,679 telephone calls (the figures for the same period in 1989 were 3,652 and 5,010, respectively).

The Department continued its efforts in modernizing communications technology at information centres and services in the field. Currently, 59 of the 67 centres are linked to Headquarters by fax machines, 22 by electronic mail, and 52 have personal computers and printers. This has further facilitated close communications in both directions, which is more essential than ever. In the course of the crisis in the Gulf some 40 centres regularly sent in reviews of local reactions to the events as reflected by local media. A summary of these reports enabled senior officials to keep abreast of views around the world on the crisis and on how the role of the United Nations was being perceived.

After a year's testing, the understanding for rationalizing field representation between the Department and UNDP has been finalized. The document is a result of many consultations between the Department and UNDP and incorporates comments received from centre directors and UNDP resident representatives. Its implementation is actively supported by the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. Directives to work closely seem to be producing visible results, not only from the perspective of presenting a unified United Nations image, but also in pooling resources. This kind of cooperation continues to be pursued directly with each member of the United Nations family and through the Joint United Nations Information Committee.

Just to give you an example of how this cooperation works in developing a media campaign, allow me to share with you the plans reported by the information centre at Manila for the forthcoming celebration in the Philippines of the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees. The Centre Director and the newly-appointed UNDP Resident Representative agreed to coordinate a wide range of initiatives involving all United Nations agencies represented in the Philippines. Information activities will be carried out in service clubs such as the Lions, the Rotary and the Elks, women's clubs, universities and human rights organizations. A pool of speakers will also be organized to address students in universities and schools during United Nations Week. Special supplements in local newspapers have been secured by the centre. Similar cooperation with other members of the United Nations system has been reported by other information centres.

It is necessary for the Department to ensure that our message reaches the very different target audiences around the world. The Department has continued with its world-wide public opinion polling programme about the United Nations. Since I last appeared before the Committee, the results from a number of polls - the latest from Kenya, Nigeria, Jordan and Hungary - have

been released. The results from three other studies, among them Argentina, are soon to be issued, and we plan in the coming year to carry out four additional projects.

The primary purpose of the opinion surveys is to measure awareness of and attitudes to the United Nations and its institutions, and in this regard they have proved to be an invaluable source of data on the impact of the Organization. As I reported to the Special Political Committee in November, they show that the Organization is widely known and highly valued, but there is still a worrying lack of awareness of the broader scope of the United Nations system. As the programme continues, we are building up a large database on the world's view of the Organization, which will enable us to monitor trends and changes as well.

Mr. Chairman, I should now like to introduce formally the various reports which the General Assembly in its resolution 45/76 B requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Committee. The first, which is contained in document A/AC.198/1991/4, describes the Department's coverage of all United Nations activities pertaining to the situation in the Middle East and the question of Palestine. The second, is a report on implementation of resolution 45/76 B, paragraph 1 (e) concerning technical assistance to radio stations that are broadcasting or willing to broadcast to South Africa, contained in document A/AC.198/1991/5.

The third report, contained in document A/AC.198/1991/6, summarizes the results of the review of the Yearbook of the United Nations. There are two aspects of the report on the Yearbook that I would like to bring to the attention of the distinguished delegates. For the first time in almost three decades, we have solicited views of a wide-ranging cross section of users of the Yearbook, including librarians, delegations and other subscribers. From comments made by actual users of the book, it is evident that, while the Yearbook is considered the most authoritative reference work about the Organization and its common system, the public is very critical of the five-year gaps between the release of the book and the period covered. The report before you, offers realistic proposals elaborated together with an external publisher, to eliminate the backlog and enable the timely publication of this important work. Your comments, we believe, will be most useful for our follow-up action on the recommendations contained in the report.

The fourth report, contained in document A/AC.198/1991/3, covers the activities of the Joint United Nations Information Committee. Finally, as requested by this Committee at its organizational session, the Department has prepared a paper on the United Nations Information Centres. I wish the Committee to take particular note of the guidelines on the establishment of new centres which have been approved by the relevant Departments in the Secretariat.

The strength of the United Nations depends on its ability to communicate and to convince. This in turn, depends to a large extent on the media. Hence the need to promote the development and enhancement of the media around the world. We have to work in an environment which is increasingly characterized by interdependence and continuous information flows in all directions and from all directions. Our role is to bring together the peoples of the world and to foster universal human values. It is our duty to be imaginative and creative

in reaching out to the many audiences with the message of the United Nations to preserve peace, to advocate development and to improve the quality of life for all humankind.

I am convinced that the outcome of your deliberations will further strengthen the potential of the Department in this regard.

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